

**Report from Force & Coercion Plank  
Washington State Summit of Mental Health Consumers & Survivors  
Kennewick, Washington \* September 16, 2006**

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A small group of passionate consumers took part in the Force & Coercion Plank. The group began by discussing common coercions and issues related to forced treatment. Items that were mentioned include:

- Disallowing of advocates in court proceedings
- Forced ECT
- Loss of housing if one doesn't cooperate
- Sexual abuse and coercion at State Hospital forensic units
- Coercion in Treatment Plans
- Forced medication
- Accountability for clinicians
- Basic human rights should not be contingent on ANYTHING

Participants repeatedly expressed the need to access natural supports, such as peer advocates, emphasizing that these individuals must be empowered with the authority to ensure that consumer directed treatment is carried out.

Also discussed was the issue of chart access. The group agreed that individuals must be allowed to access, have copies of, and most importantly amend items in their chart that are inaccurate.

The issues of negative media attention and the propagation of dangerous stereotypes regarding individuals with mental illness were brought forth. The group agreed that the media plays a huge part in justifying coercive measures and that an extensive anti-stigma/public education campaign is necessary to counteract these myths.

Towards the end goal of putting forth Outcomes, Strategies, and Measurements, the participants in the Force & Coercion Plank produced four outcomes. During this discussion, participants took the opportunity to share their personal expressions about pain and harm caused by coercive incidents in their past. As a result of this sharing, the group was not able to get to the Strategies and Measurements pieces.

**Outcome # 1:** The mental health system will not use forced treatment or coercion of any kind, except to preserve life.

**Outcome # 2:** Consumers or their advocate of choice shall direct all treatment provided by the mental health system based on the options consumers identify.

**Outcome # 3: Force or coercion by any mental health provider will result in legal sanctions.**

**Outcome # 4: The mental health system shall encourage the development and involvement of natural supports identified by the consumer and subject to the consumer's control.**